

THE NEWS LETTER

OF THE COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

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Union Now?

A Correspondence

On August 22 the Executive Secretary received a copy of the following letter addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Middle Atlantic Section of C. E. A.

August 20, 1946

Mr. Thomas F. Marshall

O. Box 3

North Wales, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Marshall:

Your letter of August 10 in regard to the fall meeting of the Middle Atlantic Section of the CEA arrived while I was away on a short vacation. Thank you for calling on me for an opinion on the three topics which you suggest. May I state briefly what seem to be to be advantages and disadvantages of each?

(Two paragraphs omitted)

1. Professional problems growing out of the present emergency—maintenance of standards, maximum loads, salaries, etc. This seems to be your best and worst subject. It is the worst, if discussion is aimless, uncoordinated with discussions by other groups, and elective only in marking as "ouble makers" teachers who make concrete suggestions. It is the best if the discussion is pointed and is part of a plan to stimulate similar discussions by other groups.

It is my opinion that discussion on your third topic would be most fruitful if narrowed to the consideration of one point—the desirability of pressing now for a union of college teachers, a union which would deal with such matters as the maintenance of standards, accreditation of teachers, maximum teaching loads, and salaries. Such a union would doubtless be of most benefit to teachers of English, history, and the languages. It would enable them to bargain effectively as the inflationary spiral continues, and it would enable college administrators who have the good of education at heart to bring irresistible pressure bear on trustees and legislatures. One of our members could report after talking over the problems of unionization with officials of the AF of L and the CIO, or we could invite representatives of these organizations to speak.

(Continued on page 2, column 2)

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of CEA will be held at the Burlington Hotel, Washington, D. C., December 29, 1946, at 6:00 p.m. The first item of business will be dinner.

The topic of the evening will be The Training Desirable for Teachers of College English. Professor Fred W. Millet of Wesleyan and Professor Theodore Spencer of Harvard have agreed to introduce the subject and to lead discussion.

All teachers of English will be welcome at this meeting. Reservations for places at the dinner should reach the Executive Secretary at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Penna., not later than December 21. Further details of the meeting and the cost of the dinner will be announced later.

Other Meetings

Va., W. Va. and N. C. Section

The Virginia - West Virginia-North Carolina Section of CEA will meet November 2, at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia. Professor Norman Foerster will speak. His topic: "Re-consideration of the Curriculum Report."

New York Section

The New York Section of CEA will meet at Columbia University, Saturday, December 14, at 9:30 A. M. Following the morning program, there will be a luncheon and symposium at the Faculty Club; cost, \$1.50 per person. Reservations for the luncheon should reach Professor Donald Clark, Columbia University, by November 26.

The topic for the meeting will be "Literature for the non-major: what can we do to increase the understanding and enjoyment of literature by the general college student?" The Speakers:

Strang Lawson, Colgate, "The Hungry Sheep Look Up And Are Not Fed"

John Farrar, publisher, "Read 'Em And Weep; A Publisher Looks At College Literature Classes"

Helen Hull, Columbia, "Speaking As A Novelist, I Would Say . . ."

Willard Thorp, Princeton, "What The Shepherd Really Ought To Do With His Crook"

(Continued on page 2, column 2)

"Composition Course . . . Of Course"?

We have had the required freshman writing course for decades. We have called it Rhetoric, Composition, English, Communication Skills, with no difference in the result. The result has been unsatisfactory. No such course has ever justified the time, energy, and money expended upon it. "Measurement" of the result, even by measurers eager to prove success, has never shown that the investment was a good one. Whatever some teachers have accomplished with some students, by and large the course has not come within hailing distance of its objectives. For this situation we have blamed the lower schools, rightly. Today we are blaming the college faculty, rightly. One cannot blame the college English departments, which have been performing with skill and devotion an impossible task.

(Continued on page 4, column 1)

Thomas Mann . . . Spokesman of the Age

[In the January, 1946, issue of the NEWS LETTER, Professor John Hankins wrote, "I should like occasionally to read a class lecture." Professor Kain's lecture on Thomas Mann is the first response to this suggestion. The editor will welcome more contributions of this sort.]

We might well ask why Thomas Mann is regarded as the greatest writer of his generation. With characteristic irony, he tells us. The account of the career of the author Aschenbach in the short story "Death in Venice" should certainly be read by anyone interested in Mann. For here Mann reveals himself, with many subtle touches of sly humor.

In answer to the question: "How can a writer attain fame in his life-time?" Mann says that influential art "must rest on an inner harmony . . . between the personal destiny of its author and that of his contemporaries." Enthusiastic admirers, he says, pretend to justify their admiration in a thousand ways, whereas the real ground for their applause is not a matter of technical rules, but one of sympathy.

(Continued on page 5, column 1)

English for the Undergraduate

Real progress can be made in the teaching of required literature courses at the undergraduate level only if the fact is squarely faced that a large majority of students do not like literature. Because of ignorance, unpleasant experiences in high school, or a predilection for so-called practical subjects such as mechanical drawing or accounting, many students exhibit distaste for anything called English. The only way to win for literature the respect of youth is to present problems that are intrinsically important, interesting, and relevant. Students need literature, foreign and American, ancient and modern, for background, interpretation, understanding, and appreciation; but it must be presented in terms of youth, not in those of the specialist, and on a broader scale than that of movements or technical criticisms.

When students learn that Chaucer was a diplomat, soldier, and member of parliament, then Chaucer's ideas take on value as reflections of wide experience. When it is pointed out that Shelley was a scientist, a reformer enraged at abuses of politics, students are stirred by the content and significance of his poetry as well as by its imagery and rhythm. The discovery that writers are concerned with politics and social situations illuminates the material and convinces the readers that literature is not produced in a vacuum or an ivory tower.

The undergraduate course in literature, then, must not only present problems that are intrinsically important and interesting, but must also relate the contributions of philosophy, economics, history, and science to the literary expression of their times; for only literature can appropriately examine both thought and expression. The presentation of an idea by Shaw or Hemingway is important, but no more so than the validity of that idea; the methods of Thucydides and Spengler are no less significant than their conclusions. In literature the student

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THE NEWS LETTER

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the errors of the old classics departments. . . . The radix malorum is in the graduate schools." Should not the whole program for training college teachers of English be subjected to a sharp and critical examination?

The CEA Critic?

"As to your title, the trouble with THE CRITIC is that it suggests two possible natures for the magazine—either that it is primarily concerned with book reviews; or that it is an extremely severe journal of protest against something. The third meaning, more or less like 'Commentator' is not so common with the world in general; but I admit that among teachers of English, that is the great majority of readers of the magazine, there will be no confusion. My own suggestion is THE CEA COMMENTATOR. (The name I'd really like myself is THE RHETORICIAN or THE RHETOR, but I fear that is like THE CRITIC—too many people would miss the meaning.)

T. O. Mabbott.

The editor's file of NEWS LETTERS still lacks copies of the November, 1942, and February, 1944, issues. Can any member fill these gaps?

(Continued from page 1, column 2)

Middle Atlantic Section

The Middle Atlantic Section of CEA will meet at Catholic University, Washington, D. C., Saturday, November 16 at 2:00 P. M. The subject is "Criteria For The Teaching Of Poetry." The speakers will be Professor James Craig LaDriere, of Catholic University and Professor D. C. Allen, of Johns Hopkins University.

(Continued from page 1, column 1)

Even if all of the meetings of the CEA this year were devoted to this subject, CEA could not, alone, unionize teachers; but it is a vigorous group, unhampered by traditions of inactivity and it could serve as file leader. If the regional history and language associations and the MLA could be moved to take a serious interest, I think that discussions would be valuable.

This is an excellent time for teachers to organize if they are going to do it. For once, there is no large

reserve pool of qualified teachers useful as strike-breakers. And although a few institutions are making admirable efforts to keep salaries in line with advancing prices, most colleges have lost the confidence of their teachers by granting increases that are too little and come too late. Probably a sufficient number of teachers are now ripe to be stimulated to cooperative action.

Most teachers do not like the idea of a union, but I think that it is increasingly apparent that a union is the teacher's only recourse in an organized and competitive society.

I am addressing a copy of this letter to Professor Robert T. Fitzhugh, Executive Secretary, College English Association, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, so that he can correspond with you if he (possibly after consulting the directors of CEA) thinks that my suggestions relating to your third possible topic have merit.

Very sincerely yours,
Guy A. Cardwell, Head
Department of English
University of Maryland.

On receipt of this letter the Secretary addressed the officers and directors of the Association as follows:

"I enclose a copy of a copy of a letter from Professor Guy A. Cardwell to the Secretary of the Middle Atlantic Section of C. E. A. Professor Cardwell's letter was in answer to one from Professor Marshall suggesting topics which might be discussed at a meeting of the Middle Atlantic Section. I have omitted two paragraphs from Professor Cardwell's letter in which he discusses briefly two other suggested topics.

"What is your feeling about the Association's adopting Professor Cardwell's suggestions? He would be willing, I think, if asked, to investigate possibilities and make a report to the annual meeting in Washington in December. The topics should certainly prove interesting to teachers and should provoke lively discussion."

Each comment below is taken from the reply of one of the directors or officers:

"Cardwell's topic is a good one, I agree, but only as an afterpiece. As a main topic it wouldn't get the right sort discussion, impromptu."

"I should prefer to see such a discussion centered on the topic, 'Is a union of teachers in the Hu-

manities desirable or necessary? I think such a preliminary discussion is essential, before the question of making a union comes up."

* * *

"Concerning a Union, I think:

1. A move on our part would not be successful.

2. The logical organization to make a move is the A. A. U. P.

3. In any case, I much doubt whether a union would accomplish anything in the matter of salaries or anything else involving money because colleges and universities are not like corporations. There

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are no profits to be drawn upon, and at best we would be referred to the board of trustees and then the alumni or the legislature, which would almost certainly get us nowhere.

4. Believing in free speech, however, I see no objection to giving Professor Cardwell a chance, in say 20 or 30 minutes, to present his proposal. (I would call it a proposal, not report, since the latter might imply our authorization.)"

* * *

"I think the proposals of Professor Cardwell in his letter of August 20 deserve a place on the program. I may say that I am not yet convinced that college teachers should form a Union, but I realize that something of the sort is likely to happen. There are of course dangers, as you no doubt know."

* * *

"In reply to your inquiry of a week ago let me say that I am heartily in favor of the suggestions contained in the excerpts from a letter by Professor Cardwell which you enclose. No topic for the Washington meeting, it seems to me, could be more timely or more provocative of good discussion than the one he particularly mentions: 'the desirability of pressing now for a union of college teachers.' The Association of University Professors, often spoken of as a union, has, indeed, won no small part of its success by a judicious use of union methods, but perhaps it would have been even more beneficent if it had allied itself from the start with the union movement. The strong affinity between 'labor' and intellectual workers ought to be put to work for the good of both parties. Thoughtful labor leaders have long recognized this, and so no doubt have many in the other camp. For the 'white collar complex' that causes many professional people to shun such association I don't know a good word that can be said."

* * *

"I am not opposed to the CEA's exploring the question of unionization. I believe, however, that the maintenance of minimum wage standards is a problem quite separate from that of raising general professional standards. I think the latter problem is more important in the long run and am more interested in it."

* * *

"I have just returned from my vacation, or I should have answered your letter sooner. Rather

than delay any longer, I shall write more briefly than the importance of Mr. Cardwell's suggestion deserves. In a word I am all for it. I have come to the conclusion with immense reluctance that we must unionize college and university teachers. There are a great many very evil products of unionization: but I see no alternative. The increases given in most places are laughable; and it is likely that we shall find it harder and harder to attract good young men and women unless we acquire the power that unions will give. I warmly approve of the idea of this topic as the main subject of many conferences of teachers as possible. When it cannot be the main topic let it be discussed anyhow."

* * *

"The subject of a teachers' organization in English is timely and important. I think it might well be part of a program or the basis of a whole program. I must add, however, that I am dubious about the practical outcome. In the first place, anybody who can talk English thinks he is fitted to teach it. In the second place, I suspect English as such is on its way out, swallowed up by Social Sciences or Humanities or Philosophy. (I am not really quite so pessimistic, but the situation is not encouraging.) And in the third place, I suspect many teachers will oppose a suggestion of affiliation with C. I. O. or A. F. of L. I should. But all that should make the discussion interesting."

* * *

"As to Professor Cardwell's proposal, I agree with those who think it should be discussed on general principles in the CEA and in all other organizations to which American college teachers as such belong. Certainly CEA alone could do little, but it could help to bring the question out into the open, and until that is done in all the large professional organizations nothing can be done by college professor for themselves, in a unified, effective way."

Dear Professor Fitzhugh:

"I am glad that the Association will discuss the possibility of a union, but I am afraid that I am not the man to lead the discussion. If my present plans go through, I shall not be in Washington for any of the meetings. You may use my letter if you want to print something leading.

Sincerely,

Guy A. Cardwell."

The Editor will welcome comment on this correspondence from the members.

J. G. E.

I've Been Reading

Members are invited to contribute to reviews of books, old or new, which they wish to call to the attention of other English teachers. Professor J. Gordon Eaker is now Head, Department of English, Jersey City Junior College, Jersey City, New Jersey.

CAMPUS VERSUS CLASSROOM

—A Candid Appraisal of the American College—by Burges Johnson, (Ives Washburn, Inc., New York, 1946, \$3.00).

The book which our editor emeritus at first thought he could not publish during his lifetime has been published, his retrospective evaluation of his years at Vassar, Syracuse, and Union. Like his earlier books, this one is joyously readable. Mr. Johnson knows how to write and knows how to tell an anecdote, and those gifts do not come by merely taking thought. No wonder he had outstanding success in teaching others how to write.

The thesis is that the campus activities of colleges, often unregulated, are making inroads on the classroom. But the activities may be valuable experiences, and the classroom can be made equally attractive. On the whole, the activities need better sponsorship. The friendly and unobtrusive way in which Mr. Johnson exerted his influence on students of writing and journalism sets a noble example.

Especially helpful is his chapter "In the Thick of It," which tells of his work as director of public relations. He found that a winning football team and stories in the newspaper have little to do with the size of a college enrollment, and he gives good advice on proper relations with the press.

Mr. Johnson believes that colleges should teach "the technique of accomplishment," or the ability to see the job through. He also believes that the emotions can be educated as well as the mind. It is difficult to praise sufficiently the warm friendly tone of the anecdotes, the shrewd, Yankee humor, and the keen insight which Burges Johnson has into the ways of college faculties and students. Here is a man who is a born teacher and writer. One cannot help feeling more respect for his job as a teacher after reading this book. It goes surprisingly fast. Like Sam Weller's Mary, the reader will "wish there was more of it."

J. G. E.

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(Continued from page 1, column 3)

But it is hard to give up our traditional faith in the course. How badly freshmen write! How naturally we want to make them write decently! We will take the "direct approach"; train these young illiterates, show them Wrong and Right till they hate the one and love the other (or till they hate both).

In the September NEWS LETTER Mr. T. M. Pearce, of New Mexico, dissenting from the CEA Curriculum Committee Report, argues for a one-semester required course in composition—will a semester do what year failed to do?—on the ground that, far from writing in a vacuum, the freshman is full of content and wants to let it out. "The student wants to say things just as much as does the professional writer." All that is needed is "an imaginative and skilled teacher" who will show freshman what they have and rouse their interest in expressing it. Now, it may be granted that all freshmen have things to say, if they have not lived in vain, but that they are bursting to say them is something else again. All that can be expected is that a good teacher will show some students what they have and arouse in these students some interest in expressing it. But not enough students and not enough interest. Most students, bored by prodding, paralyzed by the pitfalls that the instructor can point out inexhaustibly, do not even write as well as they can. This is proved by those pitifully rare occasions when average students do take fire.

Another contributor to the same issue, Mr. Sholom J. Kahn, of the College of the City of New York, asks for the retention of the "composition course . . . of course." Of course is not a good enough reason, surely. What Mr. Kahn proposes is a writing course based on models. The reading should include not only such poets, dramatists, and novelists as the Harvard Report and the CEA report call for, but also such writers as Newton, Darwin, Montesquieu, and Mill to represent the natural and social sciences, and writers like Aristotle and Dryden to represent criticism. (This could hardly be managed even in a two-year course.) The reason given for this extension is that there are different kinds of writing. "creative, scientific, and critical," and that the student should have experience in the kinds. Attention should be directed, it seems, to the several forms of discourse, and the student

should imitate the technique of the illustrative models—an old conception of the course and not one that yielded happy results. Grant that it may be desirable to have the freshman write various kinds of papers; he will, in fact, do so almost inevitably in the two-year reading-and-writing course proposed by the Committee. While studying the Bible, for instance, he may have a "creative" paper: "Portrait of a Christian"; a "scientific" paper: "Church Membership in My Community"; a "critical" paper: "Is Humility Desirable?" But he will in each case keep his eye, not on a model of technique, but on the object itself. Stimulated by reading that is taken seriously as in his other courses,—his English course having an important intellectual program,—stimulated by class discussion that bears on important issues in his own life and that of his civilization, he will write his papers in a far richer, more sustaining context and be tempted really to say something.

Norman Foerster
Chapel Hill, N. C.

NEWS LETTERS addressed to the following members have been returned. Will the members please forward their new addresses. Wendell M. Burditt, Stanley Burnshaw, Ida M. Greenfield, Ainslie Harris, Donald J. Rulfs, Kenneth Scoles, Harvey Allen, William J. Boardman, Laura Jepson, Frederick Sorensen, Benjamin Boyce, Samuel McKee Bradley, George M. Kahrl, Dorothy Koch, LeRoy Smith, Jr., Willis Wager.

(Continued from page 1, column 4)

is not only led to perceive the qualities that make good poetry or prose, but he should also be compelled to scrutinize the premises on which the work is based and the effects of that work upon society.

If War and Peace is a great novel, wherein does its greatness lie? In expression? In its picture of Russian life? In its theory of history? In its characterization? In its mystic view of religion? Surely all of these questions are relevant, and all of them demand wide reading and an understanding of many subject matters. Both students and instructor must employ all their learning to get satisfying answers. In short, English courses should

skillfully correlate and wisely interpret literature to reveal the logic, beauty, and significance of the subject matter in terms of the writer and his times. When through wise guidance students become aware of all its implications, they no longer think literature dull, pedantic, and irrelevant, but see it as a source of meaning and insight for themselves and their day.

But literature should not be the only or the major concern of English instruction for college undergraduates; training in exposition is the elemental service to which English instruction should be committed. In overlooking this fact the Foerster report abandons the struggle which should be pressed most heavily. If literature is the background of liberal arts study, then the foundation of this study is rhetoric, reading, organizing ideas, and writing or speaking. Composition is the problem which constantly faces the undergraduate in all his endeavors, yet his training in English often glosses over the need for finding ideas to express, for guaranteeing their soundness, and for presenting them effectively in terms of a specific audience.

Undergraduates cannot attain true success in any subject matter unless they can read efficiently; unless they can think, write, and speak with an understanding of sound grammar; unless they can display clarity, logic, and good form in the ordering of ideas, ease in expression, and consideration for the reader or listener. Also, the undergraduate must know how to supplement with facts and authorities his own limited knowledge, so he must be taught bibliographic method and the use of library resources.

Such skills imply concentration upon the study of grammar as a rational system, as a constructive guide to the nature of the English language rather than as a set of rote directions for the avoidance of errors; the application of logic as a method of reasoning and as a constant check upon the accuracy of conclusions; the selection and analysis of subjects suitable for discussion; the gathering and assimilating of information; the preparation of outlines, consultation with the instructor, writing and revision of drafts, and polishing of the final product; the presentation of conclusions and supporting data in various forms, lengths, and manners, in abstracts and oral reviews for different people and purposes.

Obviously such painstaking preparation implies papers of a length deserving investigation, and instructional drudgery (or pleasure) in guiding each student toward an individual and profitable conclusion. The task is not easy, but it is worth the effort. With the aid of teachers who may have specialized scholarly interests of their own, but who by choice are emphasizing problems of expression, undergraduates CAN learn to think, write, and speak with precision and ease.

(Continued on page 5, column 1)

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At present, most if not all English instructors consider service composition courses as impositions to be escaped. The truth is that if English instructors taught composition well, they would be more than justified in the eyes of universities and students. It might be desirable, indeed, to set up special schools of English intended not to teach literature but to train for composition and rhetoric. Instructors in such schools, with the aid of experts when necessary, should criticize both the content and form of papers on all levels. If such services are not developed by Schools of English, the various professional divisions are very likely to undertake their own instruction in rhetoric; law, medicine, engineering, economics, history, or the sciences may well appoint their own staff members, trained in the matter and vocabulary of the specialty but charged directly with improving its reasoning and expression.

Staffs, administrators, alumni, and students must all be aware that English is more than the pursuit of graduate degrees or the propagation of "isms"; they must be convinced that ignorance and clumsiness in thinking, writing, or speaking are tolerable; that enlightenment, clarity, and effectiveness in the use of ideas for ordinary purposes are marks of the well-trained mind. The Foerster Report and the College English Association should advance the standards, not of literature only, but also of composition and rhetoric.

J. L. Vaughan and
E. C. McClintock,
University of Virginia.

(Continued from page 1, column 3)

Now why does Thomas Mann so win our sympathy? Why is he the one writer whom the public not only admires, but, what is more important, loves—loves to such a degree that every detail of his personal life becomes a matter of heart-felt interest? I suggest that there are two reasons. First, his maturity of insight into character. And second, his firm loyalty to the human tradition.

Readers of modern literature often complain of two things. In the first place, the writing itself seems so perversely experimental. Some do without capitalization; others get along without any punctuation. Some tell their story backward; others have no stories to tell. One might well conclude

that the only resemblance of Joyce's *Ulysses* to the Greek legend is that both are about wanderings, but that Homer's hero at least knew where he was going!

Is Thomas Mann of this eccentric ilk? Assuredly not. To return again to Mann's self-portrait.

Remote on the one hand from the banal, on the other from the eccentric, his genius won . . . at once the affection of the general public and the admiration . . . of the connoisseur.

A second frequent criticism of contemporary writing is that there seem to be no normal people in these books. We have the poor white of the South. We have the insane. We have the neurotic, and those who would like to be neurotic. And books like *The Yearling* win enthusiastic response from the reading public. Why? Because Jody Baxter is a lovable boy, thoroughly human—a true companion, like that idol of boyhood, Tom Sawyer.

And modern writers often seem so absorbed with economic and social issues that their characters become mere puppets, victims of forces beyond their control. They wander through life without aspiration, and depart into oblivion. It is perhaps significant of this tendency that no less than ten book titles have been taken from Macbeth's great utterance of disillusionment: "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow", concluding, you remember, with the thought that life is

a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Man is subject to neither of these criticisms. Neither commonplace or eccentric in style, nor morbid and disillusioned in characterization, he stands as a worthy successor to Shakespeare and Tolstoy.

A worthy successor to Shakespeare and Tolstoy—yes. For Mann realizes what the great philosophers, the great artists, the great writers, and the Christian tradition have always recognized—that the supreme value in this world is the dignity of human personality. Mann's originality lies in the discovery of what we all know—that people are important. This mysterious profound, often confusing and contradictory spirit which each of us carries through life is of supreme worth. Men soon forget any writer who fails to reveal to us that which we hold most dear. For a literary genius stands with the religious prophet as a guardian of the human tradition.

What a gallery of portraits Mann's work contains! There is the lovely Antoinette of *The Buddenbrooks*, an enthusiastic girl who ripens into a mellow maturity—a figure worthy of ranking with the delightful young girls of Tolstoy's novels. There is the sensitive child, Hanno, in the same book, dreamer and lover of music. There is the young Hans Castorp of *The Magic Mountain*, of about college age, curious, but a little lazy, who passes through periods of elation, depression, confusion, and boredom, as all of us do. There is the sage old Jacob, in the Joseph story, wise with the inherited wisdom of the Hebrew patriarchs, and his son Joseph, a handsome boy, clever, aggressive, a little obnoxious at times, but who passes through the difficulties of his slavery, and rises as the leader of the Egyptians.

But Mann not only points out that Joseph wins material success, but, what is more important, that he reaches a social awareness, an integration of personality, a design for living. Thrown into the pit, sold into slavery, imprisoned in Egypt—Joseph suffers much before he succeeds.

Some time ago I heard Maxwell Anderson explain that it was just such an awakening which rendered great tragedy the most sublime of literary forms. For though the hero may suffer external defeat, he wins an inner victory. He has realized man's highest aspirations. He has shown us the potentialities of the human spirit.

To every one of Mann's principal characters there comes such a moment of awareness, a recognition of the meaning of life. In his work there are no idle dreamers, in adolescent revolt. There are no extravagant dogmas, no attractive panaceas, no enthusiasm that will prove hollow and empty in actual life. Wisdom, Mann seems to say, comes only through experience. No one realizes better than he that the world is not a path of roses; in fact it is only through the white heat of experience that character can be forged. "Everything conspicuously great is great in despite", he says: it "has come into being in defiance of all fiction and pain." And this is what I mean by the maturity of Mann's view of human life. It is this pervasive quality which makes him perhaps the most sensible, the most consoling, of contemporary writers. Mann, like Sophocles, has "seen life steadily, and seen it whole".

(Continued on page 6, column 1)

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Now in regard to the sense of tradition. It is often said that we of the twentieth century lack any central loyalty, that we are baffled by the confused age in which we live. All of us, except perhaps the high school senior who has mastered the world. I recall the amusing story of one such high school senior who was commissioned to order the class rings. He planned his design and went to the jeweler. "I want the figure of a student contemplating the universe," he told the jeweler. "Very well," the jeweler replied, "and in what proportions?" "Well," answered the proud graduate, "you'd better make the boy fill about three quarters of the space and the universe the other quarter."

This modern uncertainty has led many thinkers to dream of the mediaeval synthesis, where everything was in its place. The universe then had a center; that was the earth. The very stars in their courses were concerned with human destiny. Now our scientists seem to give a picture of the universe which places us on a boat in a storm, dipping precariously at each swell, tipping sidewise with the cross roll of the waves. The propellers are going, to be sure. But they give us a queasy sort of vibration, and every now and then a jerk as they are lifted out of the water. And besides, the compass is lost. So there we stand, on deck, looking out at blank space (there is a thick fog) and wondering whether we will hit a mine, or whether a torpedo will hit us before the boat lands.

In this plight, some writers try to let us escape by pointing out the beauties of the world around them. But if we are sea-sick the waves don't look very beautiful. Some writers, on the other hand, describe their symptoms. Finally, there are some who enjoy the spectacle of man's battle against the waves. They encourage us by pointing out that this is not the first time we have been at sea. They suggest that we might make out some landmarks, and bring the boat to port.

Thomas Mann belongs to the great humanistic tradition. He has faith in man, and in the ability of man to direct his own destiny. He has been a student of human nature, and what is perhaps of equal importance, a student of human culture. He realizes that we can learn much from the past. We must modify and adapt the lessons of the past, to be sure, but they are valuable guides. They constitute the compass we have lost.

And so, I feel, Mann is creating a modern synthesis, comparable to the oft admired synthesis of the middle ages. This world view can no longer be strictly theological or literary—modern man must take the broad sweep of the sciences, above all, psychology; he must be aware of the place of man in society, of economic and political forces. Perhaps he will learn something from the expressive arts of music and painting. It is no easy job to take all knowledge to be your province. Especially not in this day.

It would take far too long for me to trace in detail how much Mann has learned from the great literary geniuses, Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, Tolstoy; from the musicians, especially Beethoven and Wagner; from modern science; from the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche; and, most important of all, from Sigmund Freud. As a child, Mann was fascinated by the living figures of Homer—so far from us in time, so close to us in vitality. He early adopted Goethe as his ideal man of letters—a man who passed through the storm and stress of his youth to attain a full view of mankind, a man who could be at once a scientist, a statesman, and the greatest figure in German literature. From the musicians Mann developed what might be called a symphonic style—a slow, cumulative, evocative, brooding and profound style. The very rhythms of his prose suggest the richness and complexity of his thought.

Science, politics, and philosophy fill some of the richest passages in **The Magic Mountain**. The young hero is taking a rest cure at a sanitarium in the Alps. There, freed from the urgencies of practical life, he lies on his deckchair on the balcony. Around him is a magnificent panorama of mountains, reflecting in elemental grandeur the passing of the seasons and the forces of nature—glittering sunlight, storm, and snow. And as he lies there he reads. Ardently curious, he turns the pages of his scientific treatises in feverish excitement. What is the nature of life? How did life begin? What is its meaning? The figure of young Hans Castorp on his balcony becomes a symbol of the insatiable curiosity of man. Feeble, weak with disease, yet capable of probing the secrets of the universe.

Perhaps the best clue to Mann's temper of mind is his attitude toward the psychological researches of Freud. Freudian psychology has been, you know, an

excuse for license in modern life, for an escape from man's responsibilities. For more serious thinkers, it has brought on a deep despair. For now even man's soul seems corrupt and ineffectual—a mass of seething impulses, undirected and irresponsible. Thomas Mann, in an essay whose idealism is apparent even from the title—"Freud and the Future"—turns to this subject. The discoveries of Freud, he assures us, need not be an occasion for despair. The human spirit will surmount this threat to its integrity just as it has surmounted the threats in the past. We must not bury our heads in the sand. Let us face the future without fear and without reproach. Freud's contribution, says Mann, will be productive of a "new structure . . . which shall be the future dwelling for a wiser and freer humanity." A new art will arise, "a riper art than any possible in our neurotic, fear-ridden, hate-ridden world."

A Latin maxim which became popular as a rallying cry of the humanists of the Renaissance was "Nothing human is alien to me." To Thomas Mann, who perhaps is the first figure of a new renaissance, this adage might well be applied. For to him nothing human—nothing in the new fields of science, nothing in the older tradition of literature—is alien.

Thomas Mann is a thoroughly normal person. He has had a happy family life—a devoted wife, and six talented children. The tenderness of a parent is revealed in the concluding scene of **Disorder and Early Sorrow**, where the father feels the deepest sympathy for the young daughter who, with tear-stained face, has left her first disappointment. He has always enjoyed reading aloud to his family, working up plays and entertainments for holidays, chatting with friends, playing his violin, taking long walks with his dog. He loves music, and delights in his collection of records. He has all the enthusiasm of a small boy when he sees the latest model of phonograph or automobile. He looks like a business man, and not a bohemian artist, with flowing tie and unshorn hair. He enjoys travel, and looks forward to a vacation at the seashore as any of us would.

Nothing human is alien to him. And from his family, from his friends, from his books and his music, he emerges as the eminently sane defender of human values in a troubled world.

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